

Before the FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of 2002 Biennial Regulatory Review -  
Review of the Commission's Broadcast Ownership Rules  
and Other Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202  
of the Telecommunications Act of 1996,  
Notice of Proposed Rulemaking,  
MM Docket No. 02-277, (rel. Sept. 23, 2002)

To: The Secretary, FCC Commissioners, and Chief, Media Bureau

Please consider the following comments on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial  
Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules.

I am deeply disturbed by direction of communications policy in the United  
States at this time. While there are merits to a free market system, it  
is reckless to assume that market forces will provide for the diversity of  
viewpoints that our founding fathers viewed as essential to a healthy  
democracy. There is a role for government regulation in the  
communications sector. Minimally, the few remaining ownership limits must  
be maintained.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 offers a salient example of the  
drawbacks of leaving the market to its own devices. Once the ownership  
limits on radio stations were removed, we saw the acquisition of stations  
by Clear Channel at a staggering rate. Clear Channel now owns well over  
1,000 stations across America. In many major markets Clear Channel owns  
several stations. This has been a major blow to the localism that the FCC  
is charged with preserving. In many smaller locales, Clear Channel has  
the local content fed in from hundreds of miles away where one on air  
personality tapes content for multiple stations.  
While this makes sense to a corporation who is driven by profit, it does  
not serve the needs of towns and cities who have seen a dramatic decline  
in the quality and quantity of local content -- both news and local music.

The removal of the ownership limits on radio also raises the spectre of  
censorship on a mass scale. In the wake of 9/11 Clear Channel issued a  
list of songs that were deemed inappropriate for airplay. Among them John  
Lennon's "Imagine."

While self-censorship like this happens at locally owned and operated  
stations, the implications of this type of censorship have far greater  
consequence when made by a company that literally owns thousands of media  
outlets.

As these few examples indicate, there is a pressing need for governmental  
regulation in telecommunications. As a citizen I urge you to uphold the  
FCC mandate to safeguard the public interest. Please uphold the remaining  
ownership limits currently under review.

I also endorse the public hearing to be held in Virginia in February. I  
also urge the FCC to hold more such hearings throughout the country.

Respectfully Submitted.

Earl Dax

